



The South India CHURCHMAN

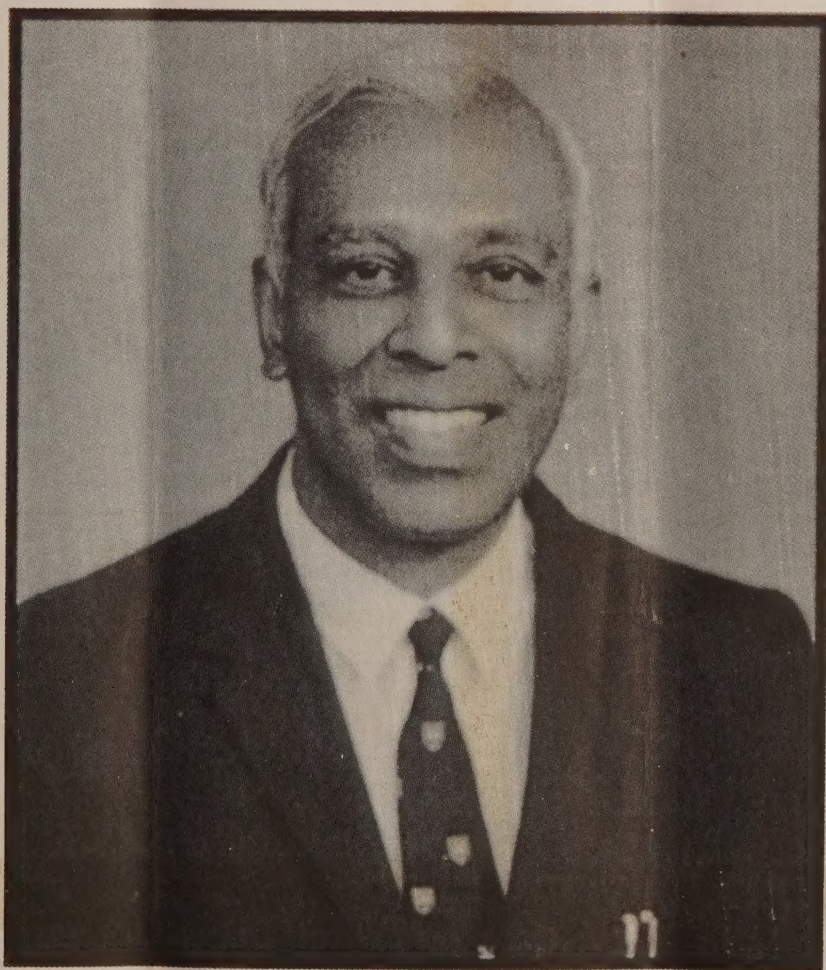
The Magazine of the Church of South India

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THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

OCTOBER 2000

The Church is in Christ as Eve was in Adam. (*Richard Hooker*)

What matters in the Church is not religion but the form of Christ, and its taking form amidst a band of men (*Dietrich bonhoeffer*)

The Church, imitating his Mother, daily gives birth to *his* members, and likewise remains a virgin. (*St. Augustine*).

Where three are gathered together, in Christ's name there is a church, even though they be layman (*Tertullian*)

The church owes to the Spirit its origin, existence and continued life and in this sense the church is a creation of the Spirit (*Hans Kueng*)

The primary and full bride of Christ never is nor can be, the individual man at prayer but only this complete organism of all faithful people throughout time and space. (*Friedrich von Hugel*)

The lance of the soldier opened the side of Christ, and behold from this wounded side, Christ built the church as once the first Mother, Eve was formed from Adam. Hence Paul says 'of his flesh we are and of his bone'. By that he means the wounded side of Jesus. As God took the rib out of Adam's side and from it formed the woman so Christ gives us water and blood from his wounded side and forms from it the church. There the slumber of Adam; here the death-sleep of Jesus. (*St. John Chrysostom*).

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THE SOUTH INDIA CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India
October 2000

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GIVE UNTO CEASAR.....

This is the appropriate time for us to discuss politics. The prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee has returned from USA where he had been to on a state visit "after a very satisfying and successful tour" soon after addressing the UN millennial meet and the general elections to the legislative assemblies of Tamil Nadu and West Bengal and a few more states are just a few months away. I can already see many eyebrows going up and people looking at me suspiciously as though I had trespassed into forbidden territory. "Politics is dirty and is fit only for scoundrels; christians should have nothing to do with it", I hear them say but in all humility I must say I differ from them. Politics like any other department of life, is a very vital area which one can ignore only at his own risk. Where there are two or three people, there has to be politics, for politics, in a general sense is the art of decision-making. Even a family when it takes decision on any matter, engages itself in politics because it is making decisions and if one doesn't make decisions oneself then someone else will have to do it for him/her. Politics as we understand the term today deals with governance at a higher level on a mega-scale, which impinges on the development and welfare of the whole community and that again involves multi-dimensional decision-making.

It is in this context that we can really understand and appreciate the value of freedom. We need to be free to decide what we want and how to achieve it. That is why people all over the world are very emotional about freedom. They cannot accept what others decide for them. Even at home it is true. Grown-up children or adults do not like the elders imposing their decisions on them and the elders do not like their children or young people making decisions for them.

It is but natural that we are exercised about what kind of role christians should play in times like this.

Christians cannot abdicate their responsibility as citizens of sovereign, secular, democratic republic to exercise their franchise. It is here that problems arise. To whom will they vote? It is clear that christians cannot take an isolationist stand. They cannot become cynical on account of being a miniscule minority in the country.

There are many who claim their allegiance and support. All citizens in general and christians in particular will have to evaluate the credentials and credibility of those who come to them for their support. We cannot and will not ask others either to vote for this party or that party or to support one party or reject another party. It is the sovereign right of individuals to decide. But we have learnt from experience that the policies and programmes

A View From the Pew

pursued by political parties and government affect the people at large and also the communities that make-up the people. Therefore it becomes our duty to issue guidelines by way of educating our people and creating an awareness among them so that in the light of this they will be able to exercise their franchise wisely and judiciously.

In this process we cannot practise exclusivism. When we exhort others especially the government to be inclusive and tolerant, we cannot afford to be exclusive and intolerant. It was perhaps excusable that the infant democracy relied too much on personalities which explains some of the parties' excessive reliance on one or two individuals. But our democracy is a vibrant democracy which has matured over the last 53 years. The time has come now for people to support ideals and values and issues and eschew personality cults which has become a bane of our body politic.

I must digress here a little to impress upon our pastors and heads of institutions and families the dire need

for encouraging our children and youngsters to envice keen interest and possibly participate in politics, trade and commerce and business and media so that christian presence can also be felt in these vital areas. It is never too late.

The founding fathers of our republic thought it wise that ours should be a sovereign, secular, democratic republic. The people therefore will have to support those parties that believe in secularism in word and spirit and in inner party democracy. If a party can not practise inner party democracy it would be too much for us to expect it to practise the same at the higher levels.

Accountability is also another thing that we need to take into account when we go to the polls and we would also do well to support those who rise above caste and regional considerations, and who are willing to sacrifice their personal interests for the sake of the larger and long term interests of the country or their constituency. We would also do well to evaluate the performance and record of those over the last few years both inside and outside the parliament and legislatures and the stand they took on various issues and their approach to the problems that the country faced and their contribution to the over all harmony and peace among all sections of the people.

When we do that, it would become obvious that we may have to say no to this party or that party, to this individual or that individual and say yes to those who are known for their courage and integrity though they may not have the money or muscle power that others may rely on. Our future is now in our hands. Let us wisely decide what kind of future we want and what we want our children to inherit. And that means that the vote we cast becomes a powerful instrument in our hands that decides our destiny.

"The Church of South India: A Poem In the Making, An Unending Quest, An Unfinished Task, A Glorious Dream, Rev.G.Dyvasirvadam

Message delivered by the General Secretary-CSI at St.George's Cathedral, Madras on the 53rd Anniversary of the Church of South India.

September 27, 2000.

At the very outset I would like to pay my tribute to Dr.Russel Chandran, my *guru* and also the mentor and teacher of many sitting here; he passed away this morning and this message on the 53rd anniversary is dedicated to his memory.

A thing of beauty is a joy for ever. A thing that is made for the sake of the world has been looked at as a witness, a miracle, a venture. We belong to yet another generation for many of us were not even born when the Church of South India was inaugurated. We have heard about its history, several stories in which our fathers and mothers participated and lived in.

The Greek word "*poiew*" means 'to make', 'to do', 'to create.' The Church of South India is understood by the new generation as a *poem* in the hands of God. It is the *doing* or *making* of the Lord. Some of us understand it as a miracle that is initiated by God. The Old Testament lesson (Ex. 37:15ff) illustrates this. The two sticks of Judah and Joseph are made one: it is the Lord's *doing*. Israel is a poem made by God.

God continued to write many more stanzas in his poem of human history, the history of salvation (*heilsgeschichte*). This is yet another stanza written by God perhaps after the stanza at Pentecost. It is very difficult for some one who was not there to feel and articulate the awesome glory of such historic events. Today many of us have gathered in this church to listen to that exciting story articulated from that poem which was composed in this very hallowed place on this day 53 years ago.

I have been drawn much to the epistle lesson that was read today from Ephesians which says that the Lord gave various gifts to his servants... 'so that the saints together make a unity in the work of building of the body of Christ.' It says different gifts are given to different people, to the pastors, evangelists, bishops, the laity, the people of God. We are called to be in his hands to be moulded to be *something beautiful*. The CSI in this context is not a new

people who make it up. In this faith journey we have encountered several experiences which started way back in 1910 with the World Missionary Council at Edinburgh and a shape has been initiated when the Congregationalists and Presbyterians came together in 1908 as South India United Church (SIUC) not knowing their journey was unfinished producing great leaders like Rev.H.A.Popley, in this movement of the CSI.

Dornakal or Thoranakal, (a necklace of stones) a remote village, becomes historical for yet another phase in this historic journey. A man from humble background goes on a journey as a solitary reaper to an unknown place like this to live amidst strangers and sees visions of a glorious united church. This young man Vedanayagam Samuel Azariah envisioned Indian culture, Indian Music and thus articulated from Indian eyes, proclaimed the Gospel



denomination, but a different *oikos*, a household of God. Thus the Church of South India is an unfinished building, a process that is in the making by the saints of this church. We look at the whole people of

through Indian idiom, thus giving a shape in the form of an Indian cultural monument symbolising a new Indian church. On this journey he was supported by the like-minded persons like the Rev.H.A.Popley and

...accepted the transition of colours from purple to saffron, from sash to girdle, from metallic expressions to wooden carvings...

God in this church not as some who will pass away in history but as those who will deliver as in a relay race, the glorious tradition to the succeeding generations.

We constitute the continuity of this faith community and a worshipping community. CSI is a people's movement and it is always on the move. It is not something made by a few bishops or church leaders but it is the

Dr.Sherwood Eddy and together they had a series of talks that would one day culminate in the event and reality of the formation of the CSI.

As we try today to read through the pages of history sitting comfortably, we would be excited to know that these leaders met at the house of bishop Whitehead, Madras and this small nucleus never thought

that they were becoming part of the historic faith journey thus making the bishop's house the 'pilgrim's inn'. It is in this context we remember today a historic Tranquebar meeting in 1919. Tranquebar baptised many missionaries like the first group of the royal Danish mission German missionaries

was created.

Bishop Hollis, the first Moderator, without seeking any glory for himself led this church through simplicity, humility and transparency. They lived in the joy of fellowship though it was a poor church. Bishop Newbegin, a second generation par-

and God of all our parents.

CSI does not canonize saints; but we live in the midst of saints. CSI is a transitional church called to gird its loins accepting the *diaconia* with humility; it is not the leadership that dictates but a *commitment to serve* that becomes the qualification for *diaconia*. A clear transition from *lordship to servanthood*. It accepted the transition of colours from *purple to saffron*, from *sash to girdle from metallic expressions to wooden carvings*. Let us not forget the commitment of these architects who have consciously opted for the church for *diaconia*. When I am comfortable I slowly distance myself from this commitment to compassion. Jesus Christ remains a paradigm of *compassionate diaconia*. The church as it grows richer materially and in terms of people and resources should be reminded of this compassion that somewhere wounded communities are waiting for us. Our church is called to take risks and to reconcile and heal wounds.

Finally as the basis of union we find *three* principles. We are called to live these 3 principles: **greater peace, closer fellowship, fuller life**. *Shalom* is peace not only in our community or in the church

....that somewhere broken and wounded communities are waiting for us. Our church is called to take risks and to reconcile and heal wounds.

Ziegenbalg and Pleutchau who came here to serve, be they Anglicans, Lutherans, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, Methodist and many others. They were given orientation there acclimatising them to the Indian situation.

These 33 Indian representatives with the exception of 2 foreigners, met in this place and saw visions of people living together in one household of God. They met in Tranquebar in 1919 and in the Methodist place in Bangalore in 1920 followed by Madras with members coming from different backgrounds and traditions, accepted the designs God had given to them, willing to be moulded in the hands of the creator God.

The process involved great leaders of two generations like bishop Pakenham Walsh, then the young principal of bishop Cotton's, Bangalore and the galaxy of eminent Indian personages like K.T.Paul, G.E.Philips, S.Gnanaprakasam, Masilamani J.D., E.L. Ananda Rao (Wesleyan), T.Gurushantha, later bishop in Mysore, A.J.Appaswamy, later bishop Canon R.A.Manuel (Anglican) D.M.Devasagayam, M.J.Sargunam, J.Jacob and J.J.Banninga and others. We are today recollecting those historic moments and those saints. We are not reenacting it as a drama; we are trying to *relive* these experiences to get the inspiration from the same Lord who is the *God of generations*. A new generation is now experiencing the great joy of the beauty that

participant in the making of this venture says this in his message for the Golden Jubilee, 'The poor church that was the CSI is now a rich church'. This church has received plenty of gifts not only material but resources in different fields. The visions of our fathers are to be realised in our church now. Ours should be a giving church not just a receiving church. We have grown so rich that we are capable of catering to the needs of those in the margins. The wider context of our country expects this church to be a generous, a kind and transforming church.

It does not remain a worshipping community alone. It is a movement of people. The young church is now a different church, a mature, a dignified, a credible church. There are several attempts to *idol-*

....let CSI not become an idol, a temple, a mere shell without a kernel, a monument.

ize this church to make it into a monument which was certainly not the dream of our parents. They said it was a uniting church. We are called to be a risk taking church, not a community that feels complacent, a community that thinks it is closed. We are open, evangelical, dialoguing on the march. As we look around, we see signs which though threatening, do not scare us nor make us static. We want to be dynamic on the move for our God for he also walks along with us as a guiding spirit. To Moses God said that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, a God of generations. He continues to be God of our fathers, God of V.S.Azariah, God of bishop Hollis, God of bishop Newbegin

but the peace of the whole extended community, the nation. This *shalom* has to reverberate in and out of this house where there is no place for litigation. Closer Fellowship that makes somebody within the church first and sends us out as someone with dignity who can counsel so that fuller life can be lived and experienced. Let CSI not become an idol, a temple, a mere shell without a kernel, a monument. May the CSI as a new culture become a channel of his grace, peace, compassion and love enabling people to look at this household of God that is beautiful, giving out a new fragrance, the fragrance of Christ, our Lord. Let it be an alternative culture in this land. *Amen*.

A Thanksgiving Service

To give praise and thanks to the Lord our God for the life and witness of Rev.Dr.Joshua Russel Chandran, former principal of United Theological College, Bangalore and an eminent ecumenical church leader the Church of South India is holding a thanksgiving service on Thursday, October 12, 2000, 6 p.m. at St George's Cathedral, Madras.

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Please send your applications along with personal testimony, bio-data and testimonials **before 30th Oct' 2000.**

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Also **WANTED** a person who has concern for prayer mobilization. Apart from himself being a prayer watchman, he should have good ability to speak in English, Hindi and/or a regional language. Preference will be given to those who are already experienced in conducting prayer meetings/concerts. Please send your personal testimony, bio-data and two testimonials to reach the **above mentioned address before October 30, 2000**

MARRIAGE AND FAMILY COUNSELLING

Mr. N. Moa Imsong*

Introduction

Marriage and family are at the centre of God's creation. God is vitally and personally interested in each marriage and family. According to the Bible, God himself instituted the first marriage in the garden of Eden. He created family through marriage so that human beings can experience God's love within the family. The introduction in the Order for the Marriage Service in the Book of Common Worship of the CSI beautifully says that marriage is a way of life instituted by God and He ordained marriage that children may be born and brought up in families in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Glory of God and that human society may stand on firm foundations.

Love is the foundation of marriage and family. Love is giving and sharing, a warm and strong feeling that someone else beside yourself is interested in you. We read about the highest standard of love in I Corinthians 13. Love is kind, love is patient, love never envies... all this applies to love within marriage and family.

Love is like a seed; it can die for want of attention. Love can keep living but may not bloom if it is neglected. Love can grow and flourish and bear fruits only if it is watered, nurtured and cultivated with understanding. Perfect marriage and family life do not just happen. They need a lot of care and attention. In loving, we are giving God to each other and in love, we find the reason for living.

Marital and family conflicts

Sadly, it is accepted by everyone that the institutions of marriage and family have been shaken to the core by the rapid social, economic and cultural changes all over the world.

Industrial and urban development in India are bringing about unprecedented changes in society, altering the distribution of population, transforming the economic basis of family living, and modifying relationships both within and outside the family circle.

There are several factors which can have a destructive effect on family ties: sudden

changes in occupational and social status, change in family roles, economic and emotional dependence especially in the case of working women, in social and parental controls. Recent surveys have shown that loss of employment of the breadwinner, crowded housing, financial stress, lack of education, ill health and lack of nutrition can all adversely affect the family.

As noted above, the current instability of marriage and the family is the result of many social and cultural changes. These changes have occurred so rapidly that we have yet not fully absorbed them into our way of life. It is in this context of rapidly changing situations that marriage and family counselling assumes immense importance.

The Church has a great stake in stable marriages and families. The life and witness of the Church depend very much upon healthy and spiritually mature families. Instability in marriages and conflicts within families adversely affect the witness of the Church. Therefore, serious attention should be paid by the Church to provide expert counselling in these areas.

Professionalism in marriage and family counselling

Of course, marriage and family counselling has been going on from time immemorial in the context of local communities and churches by elders and pastors. However, what is needed today are the services of highly skilled and committed marriage and family counsellors who can effectively deal with the highly complex marital and family discords which arise from a variety of causes and circumstances.

In what follows we shall briefly describe the causes of family and marital conflicts so that we may appreciate the intricate issues involved.

Marital discord may stem from many sources. Anything that hampers the development of a good relationship between husband and wife can cause marital discord. In other words, the source of marital conflict may lie either in the personalities involved or in the marriage itself or in the environment.

Conflicts may arise because either or both spouses are emotionally immature, or unstable, or have neurotic personality disturbances that keep them from a satisfactory adjustment to each other.

It may be that the couple is not well matched, and there are marked differences in their attitudes, values and interests. They may not have enough love for each other; their sex life may be unsatisfactory. On the other hand, some serious child bearing problem may exist.

Sometimes marital tensions appear because of the external pressure that comes from social, economic and cultural situations. For example, in-laws may criticize or otherwise make unreasonable demands on the couple. There may be vocational and career demands that put pressure on the husband/wife.

Religion can be a binding, strengthening force in a marriage, but when spouses have different viewpoints, religion can also be a contributive force for marital tension. Differences even in denominational preferences, degrees of commitment towards spiritual matters, interest in religion or expectations about the religious education of children can lead to marital tension.

In a family, conflicts may arise because of the lack of interpersonal relationship skills. There can be a lack of commitment to the family, lack of role clarity, lack of communication, lack of love, lack of environmental stability etc.

Marital and family conflicts are not new; members in families have always disagreed, quarreled, and made up. However, if in a family, the members find it difficult to deal with the tensions and remain with hurts and wounds, angry and blaming one another, then feelings of guilt and inadequacy, conflict and accusation may stay too long and lead the individual and family into serious psychological problems. That is why the availability of expert counsellor to help the individuals and families to resolve their problems is very important.

Marriage and family counselling- an

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overview

Experienced counsellors use a variety of techniques drawn from psychological counselling and psychotherapy, depending on the situation. However, in general, all the interventions aim at bringing about fundamental changes in perception and behaviour. Listed below are some of the objectives of counselling which will help reduce marital and family tensions.

1. Knowing one's roles in the family.
2. Mutual spiritual interests/ maturity.
3. Intimacy
4. Adaptability and flexibility (the ability and willingness to accept differences in a partner and to adapt, if necessary).
5. Empathy (sensitivity to the hurts and needs of partner).
6. Ability to work through problems (the recognition of emotions and a willingness to define the issues and work toward solutions).
7. Ability to give and receive love (verbally and non-verbally).
8. Emotional ability (accepting one's emotions, controlling them, and expressing them without tearing down another person).
9. Communication ability (learning to talk frequently to one another about a wide range of subjects).
10. Commitment (the willingness to yield oneself to a lifetime of adventure including risks, joys, and sorrows, commitment to work together even when difficulties, obstacles, and challenges interfere with a smooth relationship).
11. Responsibility (accountability to oneself, and to the partner).
12. Avoiding irrational beliefs.
13. Readiness to admit one's mistake.

The above objectives are more oriented to marriage counselling. In the context of family counselling, similar objectives can be described. Some are listed below. For a healthy family relationship, members of the family must be helped to learn how to:

- think logically
- become more articulate
- listen to others carefully and look be-

low the surface to notice feelings and emotions.

- think creatively, with mental mobility to see the same things in other contexts and with other possibilities.

- go beyond stereotyped solutions.
- search for and find the truth (not just the facts) and thereby deal with reality.

- link decisions with spirituality, ethics, morality and fundamental principles, not just short-term gains.

- seek the higher common good and deal with long-term consequences.

- reduce the ego and avoid taking one's-self too seriously.

- stand up for one's own beliefs, yet allow others to have different beliefs.

- respect others and develop a greater sense of justice.

- feel part of a team, completely accepted rather than alienated.

- understand that ultimately the good of others best benefits oneself.

- struggle against a problem, rather than against other family members.

- take on challenging problems with a positive attitude that anticipates good results.

- experience the greater family love, closeness and co-operation which develops when decision-making is shared.

- solve the problem together

- establish effective communication and joint decision-making.

- teach children the social and intellectual skills, essential for the work place of the future.

Family Counselling is most effective when all the members of a family are able to come together and have a consultation with the help of a trained family counsellor to create better family relationships. During such a consultation, the counsellor usually helps them to follow a scheme given below:

- a. At the outset, specify clearly the object of the consultation.

- b. What are the relevant facts? Who,

what, where, when, why and how?

- c. What are the spiritual, ethical, moral, social and practical considerations to be taken into account?

- d. What are the possible solutions, strategies and plans and the costs in time, money, energy and emotion associated with them?

- e. Examine each and select the best one, with unanimous agreement if possible.

- f. Carry out the decision unitedly. No one should withhold his/her support once the decision has been made. Reevaluate and modify it if necessary.

The Church and Family Counselling

It is high time that churches understand the deep needs of our present marriages and families. Through marriage and family counselling (individual, couple and group), seminars and workshops (focusing on marriage and family needs), counsellors and churches can prevent a lot of marriage and family problems. Today's problems and crises demand professional counsellors in every church. In order to fulfill the plan and purpose of God, marriage and family counselling should be seriously taken into consideration by the church.

Marriages fail not because of problems encountered, but largely because of the inadequacy of the two persons involved. If marriage is to weather future difficulties, both men and women must be equipped with the knowledge and the qualities to succeed as husband and wife, as father and mother. So many young people enter marriage without really knowing what will be expected of them. A mature approach to marriage requires an understanding of its various aspects, psychological and sexual, spiritual (teaching the biblical guidelines for marriage). There are basic attitudes that both husband and wife ought to be familiar with that they can use to make married life and love a source of joy and life-long happiness. Unfortunately, this seems to be lacking in many marriages. Therefore, Churches should give equal importance to pre-marital counselling which would make possible happy marriages.



Faith and Social Action

Church of South India

Dear Friend,

To be in touch with you through the pages of the South India Church man is both a privilege and pleasure. The Diaconal Ministry is a creation of the Church of South India Synod to initiate dialogue on matters of faith and social action; to express solidarity with the Dalits, Adivasis, women and children in their struggles for empowerment, respect and dignity. The vision of the CSI Diaconal Ministry or CSI DM, is to strive towards the actualisation of a new social order, an alternate society, a life with meaning and hope for all people, especially the most marginalised so that not only will they have a life, but a life as Jesus promised, in all its fullness.

Through these pages every month we will keep you posted of our ideas, challenges and experiences. We also intend to engage you in reflection and discussion on issues of Global, National and State Level importance which have a direct bearing on the poor and oppressed. We also propose to share with you stories of gloom and hope, pain and joy, frustrations and victories from our own involvement.

We invite you to be partners with us in this Wilderness Journey ... a journey which affirms our Faith which in turn challenges us to stand alongside the broken in society in their struggle for a Just, Egalitarian, Participatory, Ecological and Gender Sensitive Society....

Sbalom.....

Richard Devadoss

Director, Diaconal Ministry

...When the Drums fell Silent

17th May 2000

Themmavur, a village in Pudukkottai District of Tamil Nadu.

A violent attack.

About 30 Dalits, including 7 women were admitted with serious injuries to the government hospital in Pudukkottai...around 30 grievously wounded. 36 houses vandalised and food, utensils, jewellery looted and destroyed.

Themmavur Panchayat has 18 hamlets with a population of about 3000. The 500 Dalits account for about one -sixth of its population.

Since four years, Dalits refused to beat the drums. The reason being...Called primarily only to beat the drums during the funerals ceremonies and Temple festivals, they realised the gross injustice in this division of labour which seeks only to perpetuate the social and cultural ostracism they are forced to bear centuries on..... Their refusal came to be looked upon as a flagrant violation of 'purity-impurity' concepts by the powerful families of the dominant caste of the village. As a result, the Dalits had to face a lot of indignities but that did not deter them from their belief in human dignity and self-worth.

Apprehending danger, the Dalits on the morning of 17th May, the day of the festival, lodged a complaint at the Udayalipatti police station. A sub-inspector



Narrating the barrowing tale

and the village Administrative Officer made an 'on-the-spot enquiry' and reportedly tried to persuade the Dalits to reconsider the decision. The resolute Dalits of Themmavur stood by their earlier refusal to beat the drums but offered to stay away from the festival to avoid any clashes. A security cover was provided till 5 PM.

In Faith....With People

CSI Diaconal Ministry

Shortly after the police force was withdrawn, a shop owner, belonging to the dominant caste, yet known to be a sympathiser to the cause of the Dalits was maliciously attacked by a group of dominant caste, wielding knives, sickles and casurina clubs. Later, in an act of vindictiveness they went on a rampage beating up the Dalits, ransacking their houses, looting food, utensils and ornaments, whatever little they possessed. The police arrived only at ten in the night, but by then the miscreants had fled the scene.

The church of south India, through the Diaconal Ministry has come in strongly identifying itself with this brave struggle of self-determination. Essentials like rice and dhal had been distributed. A fact finding team consisting of Human Rights Activists, Advocates, Leaders of people's Movements had been commissioned to make an in-depth study of the incident. The report of the team was made public at the press meet convened on 4th June at Madurai. Efforts are being taken to impart Legal and Human Rights Education to the Dalits and also to provide a hand pump which would go a long way in the existing scenario of the dominant caste controlling the water supply of the village.

The Dalits of Themmavur have definitely a long way to go....but a beginning has been made and a definite impact has been felt. Their resilience, spirited determination inspite of *brokenness* all around endears and emboldens those others, who like them are putting up brave fights, however small they may be. And also us who along with them strive to weave communities..... alternate communities with no margins, no labels and....no victor and victims.

Rain Devastates Andhra Pradesh

23rd to 25th August, 2000

130 feared Dead

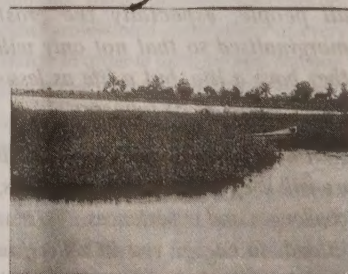


Affected districts 13



2,886 Villages Marooned

Sheets of Water all over



412 Roads Cut Off

1,570 Irrigation tanks breached



1,78,000 Hectares of Crop Damaged



An estimated Loss of Rs.776 Crores

Floods Unabated in Kerala

27th August

119 feared Dead

118 Injured

4 Reported Missing



The flood waters inundated about 40 houses in the largest dalit colony in the district at Ezhikkad, near Arangudi.



Landslides

142 Villages Affected

Hundereds of Acres of Paddy Inundated

6 Districts worst Hit

**URGENT
APPEAL**

Though emergency relief measures were taken up in the 5 dioceses of Andhra Pradesh, Nandyal, Rayalaseema, Medak, Dornakal and Krishna-Godavari; in the two dioceses of Kerala Madhya and East, yet the needs of the flood victims are enormous. Hopelessness and uncertainty looms large for them with homes destroyed, members lost in the family, property destroyed, perhaps, nothing left to even restart for most of them.

They need you to stand by them.

Send in your contributions to

The Hon. Treasurer,

CSI Synod Centre

5, Whites Road, Royapettah

Chennai-14

The South India Churchman, October, 2000

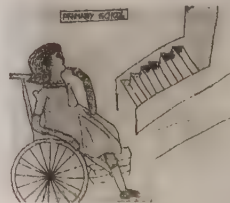
Expressing through Art

The Diaconal Ministry has been implementing a community based Rehabilitation programme at Tiruvannamalai District of Vellore Diocese for children who are *Differently Abled*. As part of this venture, a thematic painting competition 'Rights of the Disabled' was held on 13th Aug 2000 at Tiruvannamalai.

205 children participated from 18 blocks of the District. 10 best entries were awarded cash prizes of Rs.1,000 each. While the rest received awards ranging from Rs.750 to Rs.20. Representatives from the State Government, Vellore Diocese and Diaconal Ministry lent support to the event.



Participating Children



The Rights of the Differently Abled



These differently abled children possess talents, interests, enthusiasm for life and of course ability. Do they require anything from us? Not our sympathy but affirmation of their strengths and respect for what they are.



Girl Child

A Commitment of the Church of South India

Circle of Life and Death

If you are born a girl, in India, you have

- The right to be born
(abort the foetus, if it is a girl)
- The right to live:
(kill the infant, if it is a girl)
- The right to nutrition:
(starve the baby, if it is a girl)
- The right to health:
(neglect ill health if it is a girl)
- The right to learn:
(educate minimally if it is a girl)
- The right to childhood
(train in homework and child care if it is a girl)
- The right to choice:
(marry off soon after puberty, if it is a girl)
- The right to reproductive health
(insist on the birth of a boy not a girl)
- The Right to be born:
(Abort the foetus if it is a girl

-Kalpana Sharma

Vouch Your Support to the CSI Campaign for the Girl Child!

Churches, Culture and Communication - Five Indian Models!

Rev Dr John Joshua Raja*

One of the primary tasks of the churches is to share the gospel and its values in all forms and through every possible means of communication. Among many churches in South India, the conventional models such as preaching and worship services are popular even when they use a mass medium. Because of these old models, media seem to be the extensions of the pulpit. In recent time, churches attempted to raise concern over certain social and cultural values that are propagated, sold and consumed through the mass mediated message. These are two dominant paradigms with which the church approached the mass media. Besides conventional methods of Christian communication such as preaching and worship services, churches have developed other models of communication such as through education and social services.

As religious fundamentalism is on the rise and cultural diversity is under question there is a need for the churches to consider some new models of christian communication. Some of the old models are increasingly becoming irrelevant to the Indian context. The failure in our communication has caused a huge misunderstanding and brought suspicion of our mission among non-christians. There is a need for the churches in India to rethink the present models and to develop Indian models of christian communication. This article proposes five models (some of which are already considered by the churches in India) which are: *i. Model for reconciliation, ii. development model, iii. cultural model, iv. participatory model* and *v. interactive*

model. If these models are considered, the vision of the churches could be widened. The churches would find a space to share the values of the kingdom with people outside the church.

A Model for Reconciliation

The participation of the churches and their communicators can aim at bringing the religious communities together and helping them to live peacefully as they had done for centuries. They need to see this as an opportunity to participate in the community building process through all available means. This is possible by sharing the gospel indirectly by using the people's cultural forms, by sharing their beliefs and by interacting with their worldview. It is important for the churches, their pastors, missionaries and their media workers to help religious communities to interpret their own beliefs and world view in such a way that they can live together.

If audiences use particular forms of communication such as audiocassettes or videocassettes, then the communicators should produce filmed events or stories that might help them to be reconciled with other communities. As this is a very sensitive issue, the *genre* they use could be familiar to the audience (such as series, documentaries and films) and interpret their beliefs (Hindu or Muslim beliefs) in a way that enables them to live with other religious communities. In bringing about this reconciling act, the love of God is expressed through this form of communication and enables the audience to search for God. By participating in their search for God, christian

communicators might lead them towards the gospel while learning more about their own experience of God. The role of the christian communicator cannot, however, be limited to one of reconciliation between religious communities. In India there are also conflicts between communities based on caste and race.

While bringing about reconciliation between communities, the christian communicators remain hidden and interact indirectly with the audience. This does not eliminate preaching as a means of communication, but it emphasises the importance of communicating the gospel indirectly in a context where various claims and counter claims of religions have destroyed many people's lives. In this sense christian communication is not merely a process of proclaiming the gospel and sending information about the churches; it is a process of participating in people's lives. In this process, the gospel is revealed in the participation of the christian communicator rather than merely through the content of the message. This model is possible in practice because the non-christian audience would not see it as a christian promotional programme yet they may still see the meanings of the gospel in the churches' participation.

B. Development Model

Indian churches have rightly recognised the need for development and growth among people in terms of economic conditions. They offer various social services and a variety of approaches to the poor. Through education, medical help and other social

* He teaches at the United Theological College, Bangalore

projects, the churches in India work with the people. Even though Indian churches have collaborated with foreign agencies to improve the standard of people's lives through various projects, the elimination of ignorance and beliefs that lead to certain evil practices in society seems to have low priority. These beliefs and evil practices stand in the way of development. A major difficulty is that these beliefs and practices are culturally and socially fixed. Even those within the social set up cannot speak out against them. Instead of maintaining positive aspects of Indian culture, the churches too have been influenced by such ignorant beliefs and practices.

An example can be taken from a village near Dharmapuri where female infants are killed by administering poison in order to avoid giving dowries. Even though this evil practice of killing female infants by poisoning is due to the economic problems there, it is culturally moulded into routine practice. Even if parents do not want to kill their infants, they are forced to kill them to maintain the practice. The churches can interact with these people in order to help to eliminate this practice through their video programmes. One of the problems is that the people do not think of them as evil, but see them as part of their social and cultural practices.

Those who condemn such practices are considered to be anti-national and anti-cultural.

The churches have to use the local cultural forms of communication to challenge some of these inhuman cultural practices. By using local cultural forms the churches and their communicators could help those communities to reinterpret their beliefs and thus to eliminate their evil practices. Because most of these communities use modern media, christian communicators can interact through such media using their *genre* and thus communicate reinterpreted beliefs and worldview.

Christian communicators can work together by providing audiovisual programmes that can be shown in christian schools and colleges. By using local forms such as folk dances, dramas and other forms of communication it is possible to interact with a young audience who might become aware of such inhuman practices. Some of these forms of communication are already being used by the department of communication of the Church of South India, which are helping to bring awareness among christians and non-christians. Cultural forms like drama and dances are also used in evangelism.

If a community is decaying because of the ignorance of its members the first

step of christian communicators is to help them to reinterpret their beliefs and worldview. By helping the community to discard these evil practices, the communicators provide a chance to express God's love through their participation. This is one of the ways to interact with the people and share the gospel indirectly.

C. Cultural Model

The churches in India need to use the available means to communicate the gospel to both christians and non-christians. In the Indian context, there are a variety of cultural forms available to christian communicators as they participate in the communication process. In 1983 an attempt was made by the Department of Communication (CSI) to incorporate folk forms into audiovisual means. The department produced an audiocassette and film strips showing dances of the Lambadi and Gonds tribes in South India to communicate the gospel to them. The gospel could be interpreted through the local forms of communication, particularly through the Indian tradition of story telling. There are a variety of hermeneutic methods and forms available in South Indian culture.

Indian sages used a wider range of communication techniques to help their audience to interpret their beliefs (e.g. dance, drama, telling

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Puranas (long stories), dialogue, displaying images, arts and yoga). They also have implicit ways of interpreting people's beliefs and worldview. There are cultural aesthetic elements that have to be mixed with new forms of communication in order to make christian communion interesting and attractive. The CSI communication department accepted this fact in its statement about their own participation by saying that, "today if we evaluate our programmes and our efforts to witness, we may have to confess that often our programmes are ineffectual and uninteresting. They lack the desirable punch". There is a wide range of material, talented people, cultural forms, instruments, artistic elements and methods available to christian communicators to choose from in South Indian context.

There is some fear among the churches and christians that these attempts might distort the gospel message. To remove this fear, christian communicators have to show their Christian audience that cultural elements in India can provide better communicative forms than most Western forms. It is a two way process in which christian communicators use indigenous forms to interpret the gospel to a christian audience and at the same time are able to interact with the non-christian audience. The churches in India can once again interact with people in India as they did through education and social services. By sharing and using local cultural means and forms can the churches share the gospel with the wider audience regardless of their religion and race.

D. Participatory Model

Even though the churches in India have their own means of communica-

tion, they have to participate in the wider process of communication in which government and private media institutions are engaged. It is essential for churches to challenge the wider media practice of the Indian broadcast media and to help them to democratise their systems of communication. The Indian church could bring awareness about the new broadcasting bill(1997) among christians and non-christians. The bill was originally introduced as the Prasar Bharati Act in 1990. Some additional amendments were accepted in 1997 by the Indian Parliament which allow private radio and television broadcasting in India.

By exploring the possibilities of engagement, the church has to encourage its members to participate in the process of democratising these institutions of communication in India. The churches should train personnel for the mass media by introducing into their educational institutions the necessary technical and theoretical training. Through such participation the christian media institutions may be able to show God's love and care for the audience indirectly. At times they could challenge the audiences' worldview by their presence in the public media.

E. Interactive Model

Even before the communicators share their message the audiences are engaged in a variety of cultural interactions. Sometimes they participate and interact through the media and this can enhance their cultural interactions. The use of the interactive media such as Internet, Video-conferencing by a large number of people leads to an interactive culture in which communicator and audience are both the learners and participants. This evolution of the interactive culture poses serious challenges for

christian communion.

Communication is interactive because there are a large variety of media and forms available to communicators. Interactive characteristics of communication are important because they demand a christian communicator to work with other communicators who have similar interests. The use of electronic mails and Internet in the computers enhances this interactivity among the participants. They also form a culture of interactivity where top-to-bottom type of communication is seriously challenged. Every one is a participant in this interactive communication process. Thus churches may consider the importance of the interactive characteristics of communication and interact with the wider audience. These characteristics give importance to the equal status of the participants, particularly the communicator and audience.

These *five* models are given to enable the church to adapt and participate in the people's process of communication indirectly using all available means. In this, the Indian churches and their communicators can produce a model for other churches around the world, just as they provided an ecumenical model by forming the Church of South India in 1947. The church in India can share the gospel with others while learning about other people's beliefs and worldview. It will do this by bringing about reconciliation, by helping people in their development, by using cultural forms, and by participating in their processes. Unless this interaction is based on the interaction of the churches with God through Christ, the audience will not recognise the gospel message.

MISSION NEWS

DIOCESAN LEVEL PROGRAMME - NANDYAL DIOCESE

The diocesan level programme was conducted at Nandyal from 7th to 9th of August, 2000 at the Bishop Ryder Devapriam memorial centre. About 40 participants including catechists, evangelists and Bible Women participated. The Rt. Rev. G.T. Abraham, bishop of Nandyal diocese, Rev. Dr. Y. Yesurathnam, former Principal of A.C.T.C. Hyderabad and Rev. Dr. W.S. Milton Jeganathan, Director, were the resource persons for this programme.

During these two days the training aspect in the context of Mission and Gospel and Culture in the midst of contemporary challenges were discussed in detail and in groups. The participants were encouraged to take active part in God's Mission in their local context.

SHORT TERM TRAINING IN EVANGELISM FOR PARTICIPATION 'STEP' - KARIMNAGAR DIOCESE

The Short Term Training in Evangelism for participation (STEP) programme was conducted in Karimnagar Diocese from 14th to 16th of August, 2000 at Shanti Nilayam, Kazipet.

About 90 participants including catechists, evangelists and Bible Women participated in this short term training programme. The Rt. Rev. S.J. Theodore, Bishop of

Karimnagar Diocese, Rev. Dr. Y. Yesurathnam, former Principal of A.C.T.C. and Rev. Dr. W.S. Milton Jeganathan were the resource persons for this programme.

Considering the present socio,

29th of August'2000 at Holiday Home, Kumli, East Kerala diocese. About 70 participants from all the dioceses in Kerala participated.

Rev. Dr. David Joy, Professor of United Theological College, Bangalore, Rev. J.K. Daniel and Rev. Dr. W.S. Milton Jeganathan were the resource persons.

Particularly the regional issues in the context of Mission were identified and the participants were encouraged to take active participation in God's Mission at the regional level. The Biblical understanding of Mission, and the practical methodologies and strate-

gies to be adopted in the context of Mission were emphasised with theological reflections and contextual realities. The participants were motivated and encouraged to be effective witnesses in their local contexts as 'Agents of Liberation' and 'Healing Communities'.

Biblical understanding of Mission and the Holy Spirit and Mission and communication were very much emphasised during this training programme. The participants were encouraged and equipped for active participation in God's Mission.

KERALA REGIONAL PROGRAMME ON MISSION

The Kerala Regional level programme on Missions was conducted on 28th and 14

*-Rev. Dr. W.S. Milton Jeganathan, Director,
Dept. of Mission and Evangelism*



PASTORS' PAGE

Our church has completed 53 years as a united church and looks forward with the open vision of a uniting church. The ministers played a key role in shaping the Ministry, Liturgy and theology of our church. We remember with gratitude the contribution they have made to make our church strong and vibrant. The ministers of this generation are called upon to enrich the ministry by infusing new and relevant contents into their ministry which will cater to the needs of the people today. With this view in mind periodical programmes are arranged for the pastors.

Pastors Study and Reflection 2000 (PA-STU-RE)

Sixteen pastor couples participated in the week long PA-STU-RE programme at the CSI Centre, Chennai from 11-16, September 2000. *New spirituality for the Millennium* was the theme. The General Secretary of the Synod Rev.G.Dyvasirvadam inaugurated the programme in which Mr.Frederick William, the Synod Treasurer interacted with the group, raising concerns of ministry and stewardship. Rev.Dr.Daniel Premkumar, the Director for the Department of Dalit and

Adivasi Concerns led in inspiring and indepth Bible Studies. All other Directors of the Synod Departments shared the visions of their Departments and the approaches they apply to make the ministry meaningful to the people.

Of course the times of singing, prayer and sharing created a closer fellowship

abled them to learn new trends in ministry.

Rayalaseema Diocesan Clergy Regreat

The pastors, their spouses and the senior evangelists of Rayalaseema diocese had their Annual Retreat from 18th to 20th September 2000 at the Campus Crusade for Christ, Lingarajapuram, Bangalore. The Rt.Rev.C.B.M. Frederick, the Bishop in

Rayalaseema organized the Retreat in such a way that the participants were spiritually nourished for the ongoing ministry in the diocese. The Pastoral Aid Department of the CSI Synod and the campus crusade for christ co-sponsored the programme. In the Inaugural Session Pastoral Aid Department Director introduced the Millennial Synod theme '*Cross the Continuing*

Sign of Hope'. Other sessions were handled by the leaders of Campus Crusade for Christ who emphasized the theme '*Leadership in the church*'. The times of singing, sharing, prayer fellowship brought the pastors for a more committed ministry in the new Millennium.

-Rev.G.Devakadasham



among the team members. All the afternoons the participants went out into the city for exposure. They brought back lot of stories about their visits to the crowded city. The historically important church sites in Chennai, the Little Mount, St.Thomas Mount, Santhome Cathedral, St.Georges Cathedral and St.Mary's Church were visited by the group. A week away from the Parish schedule kept the pastor couples relaxed and en-

Modernization at the synod secretariat

There is a powerful wind of modernization sweeping across the synod secretariat these days. Sometime ago the secretarial staff here bade good-bye to their manual type-writers and acquired modern electronic gadgets. Now one can see computers in every floor. Last month the Moderator, the Most Rev.K.J.Samuel declared open a computer section attached to the communication department of the synod housing two computers to be used by all the departments. The day is not far off when all departments will have their own computers. In the picture on the right we see the Moderator blessing the computer and switching it on and the General Secretary standing by proud of the latest acquisition.



THE KARIMNAGAR DIOCESAN YOUTH CONFERENCE

The Karimnagar Diocesan Youth Conference was held at the Divya Deepthi Retreat Centre in Kazipet on the 22nd and 23rd of September 2000. Young leaders from the various congregations of the diocese participated. The Diocesan Vice Chairman Rev.J.D.John inaugurated. Rev.G.Manickya Rao the Diocesan Secretary spoke on the qualities of youth leadership. Rev.Vinod Victor the Synod Youth Secretary delivered the key note address. The other resource persons included Bishop S.J. Theodore, Dr.S.Sobha of the Kakathiya University and Mr.U.Raja Rao, the Diocesan Youth Secretary among others. The Diocesan leaders recalled that this was a diocesan level youth gathering held after an interval and hoped that it would pave the way for a fresh lease of life in the diocesan youth movement.

The Tirunelveli Diocese Youth Conference: The annual diocesan youth camps of the Tirunelveli Diocese were held at the CSI Retreat Centre Courtallam from the 22nd September

to the 1st of October 2000. About 1200 young people in four batches attended the camp. The theme chosen this year was 'In search of relationships' based on Luke 15:8 'I will arise and go to my father'. The leaders of the conference included Rt.Rev.S.Jeyapaul David, Rev.Vinod Victor, Rev.D.G.A. Thomas, Mrs. Rani Jeyakaran, Mr.Arputharaj and others.

The North Kerala Regional Youth Conferences: The Youth camps of the North Kerala Diocese was held at four different places during September-October 2000. The Malabar Regional Youth Conference was held at the Hebbichs Church at Kannur from the 8th to 10th September 2000. The Bishop Chackalackal of the Catholic Church inaugurated. Bishop George Isaac gave the key note address and Rev.Vinod Victor gave the theme presentation on the theme. The Methods of evangelisation in a pluralistic context. A salient feature of the camps was that about 1500 youngsters came together in four different places. A rural youngsters get together was organised at Munnur from the 27th to 29th September 2000.

The South Kerala Diocesan Youth Conference: The 40th Annual Youth conference of the South Kerala Diocese

was held at Kollam from the 10th to 13th September 2000. Prof.Balaraman, Member State Human Rights Commission inaugurated J.W. Gladstone presided and then gave a talk on the theme "people of God". The Rev.Vinod Victor made the theme presentation. The other resource persons included Rev.David Dr.D.Benjamin, Rev.I.Noble Bright and the Rev.Franklyn Das.

Forthcoming Youth Conference: The Trichy Tanjuavoor Diocesan Youth Conference will be held at Dharapuram from the 30th September to 2nd October 2000. The Vellore Diocesan Youth Conference will be held from 1st October at Vellore. The East Kerala and Madhya Kerala Youth Conferences will be held from the 4th to 8th October at Melukavu and Kumplampoika respectively.

CSI Day celebration on 27th September 2000: The Madras Diocesan Youth Board organised a one day youth seminar on church unity. Pointers to the future at the St.George's Cathedral Chennai. Over 200 chosen youth leaders participated. The resource persons included Rev.Robert Guruswamy, Rev.Jacqueline Enose and Rev.Vinod Victor. The Rt.Rev.Dr.V.Devasahayam recollected the history of this great church. Rev.Paul Francis led the seminar.

-Rev.Vinod Victor

Announcement of Vacancies

The Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI) requires programme staff. Ideal candidate would be with:

- A postgraduate degree, preferably in Journalism/English Literature or equivalent
 - High level communication skills and communication-related experience with NGOs, magazines, news papers or other relevant experience.
 - Experience and interest in issues related to health and development, preferably with NGOs.
 - Computer savvy (MS office, knowledge of pagemaker useful). The individual should be able to:
 - Handle correspondence and budgets, Liaise with the press and electronic media Attractive compensation.
- Please apply with CV & samples of publications/production to:

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E-mail>cmai@cmai.org<

We are now on the Home Stretch! ...10.9.8.7.6.5.

Church of South India Synod Youth Festival 2000

Dates : 2 - 5, November 2000

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Theme : "Lord, Make Us Channels of Your Peace"

Inauguration : The Most Rev. K. J. Samuel, Moderator

Bible Studies: The Rev. G. Dyvasirvadam

Theme Presentation: The Rt. Rev. J. W. Gladstone

The Rt. Rev. V. Devasahayam

Host Bishop : The Rt. Rev. Mahimai Rufus

Chairperson : The Rt. Rev. George Isaac

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OBITUARY

Rev. Dr. Josbua Russel Chandran

Dr. Chandran's contributions to the Church in India and ecumenical movement are many and varied. He has represented the CSI at various ecumenical meetings and committees and participated in the discussions on faith and order, church and society and theological education. He served on the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches and was also the Vice-Moderator of the Executive Committee (1966-68).

He was active in the Christian Peace Conference, a forum of theologians from Socialist countries and visited churches and theological seminaries in Eastern Europe and Soviet Russia. He was the President of the Asian Christian Peace Conference. He was also one of the founding members of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians.

Back home he has been the Convenor of the CSI Synod's Theological Commission, the Convenor of the Union Negotiations Committee of the CSI and the first secretary of the Joint Council of the CNI and the CSI and the Mar Thoma Church. In fact, the theological thought of the CSI in its early stages has been shaped by him.

Perhaps, his contribution to the theological education is more significant. Dr. Chandran taught theology and ethics at the United Theological College, Bangalore from 1950 till 1983. He was the first Indian Principal of UTC since 1954 till his retirement. The basic structure of this premier theological college was laid by him alone.

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